# *Oldest Dade House Gets New Home*

By GEORGE STEIN
Herald Staff Writer

The old house moved slowly along 12th Street Tuesday, past head-shaking neighbors, past staring children, on its way to a final resting place in Lummus Park.

"We knew it was old from the way it felt. It would creak," said Esteban Mercado, who rented the house several years ago. "Somebody told us how old it was. We didn't believe them. We said, 'Nah, it's not that old.' "

**IT IS** the oldest house in Dade County.

William Wagner put it up sometime between 1855, when he arrived at Fort Dallas at the mouth of the Miami River, and 1875, when he filed a formal deposition for a homestead claim of 40 acres. He built it out of Dade County pine with pegged, hand-hewn main beams.

The house was moved from a site near the Miami River to 1145 NW Eighth Ave. in 1909.

Tuesday, the Dade Heritage Trust paid $3,750 to move the shabby 1½-story, 15-foot-by-30-foot structure a half mile to Lummus Park.

The Trust wanted the house moved because the area's transit station will be immediately adjacent to it. The city of Miami agreed to the move.

"It needs to be fixed up. Put some paint on it," said Lorene Rice, 69, of 724 NW 12th St., who came out in a pink house coat and slippers to watch the house inch by.

Once the house is in the park, the Heritage Trust will strip the peeling paint and salvage as much of the original structure as possible, restoring it to the way it looked to William Wagner.

**THE TRUST** bought the house for $1 from Beverly Anderson. Walking along with the house, Anderson said he purchased the property eight years ago to build an apartment building. He was renting out the house when Dolly McIntyre of the Trust called.

"We'd like to buy it," she said. "It's the oldest house."

Anderson said, "I thought it was some kind of screwball. I didn't know what to think."

But, as a construction man, he is fascinated by the still-solid underframe of the house.

"I crawled under there to make some repairs," he said. "I saw the handhewn beams. I crawled all under there. I was exploring."

— JOHN WALTHER / Miami Herald Staff

Hanford Bennett, 3, Watches Wagner Homestead Moved

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